

Muhammad and Menstruation

[Sam Shamoun](#)

The Quran expressly prohibits a man from approaching his wife during her monthly cycle:

They will question thee concerning the monthly course. Say: 'It is hurt; so go apart from women during the monthly course, **and do not approach them till they are clean. When they have cleansed themselves, then come unto them as God has commanded you.**' Truly, God loves those who repent, and He loves those who cleanse themselves. S. 2:222 Arberry

Here is another version:

They ask you concerning menstruation. Say: that is an Adha (a harmful thing for a husband to have a sexual intercourse with his wife while she is having her menses), **therefore keep away from women during menses and go not unto them till they have purified (from menses and have taken a bath). And when they have purified themselves, then go in unto them as Allah has ordained for you** (go in unto them in any manner as long as it is in their vagina). Truly, Allah loves those who turn unto Him in repentance and loves those who purify themselves (by taking a bath and cleaning and washing thoroughly their private parts, bodies, for their prayers, etc.). Hilali-Khan

The hadith provides an example of how the foregoing directive was carried out:

Narrated Aisha, Ummul Mu'minin:

When I menstruated, I left the bed and lay on the reed-mat *and did not approach or come near the Apostle of Allah* (peace_be_upon_him) *until we were purified.* (Sunan Abu Dawud, Book 1, [Number 0271](#))

As a sidenote, it is interesting that it is Aisha who has to leave the bed, not Muhammad, even though it is supposedly her house. He has plenty of other beds he could go to sleep in, but Aisha now has to lie on the floor!

It is obvious from the above that men were forbidden from approaching menstruating women altogether, which agrees fully with some of the ritual purity commands found in God's true Word, the Torah or Pentateuch:

"When a woman has a discharge, and the discharge in her body is blood, she shall be in her menstrual impurity for seven days, **and whoever touches her shall be unclean until the evening.** And everything on which she lies during her menstrual impurity shall be unclean. Everything also on which she sits shall be unclean. **And whoever touches her bed shall wash his clothes and bathe himself in water and be unclean until the evening. And whoever touches anything on which she sits shall wash his clothes and bathe himself in water and be unclean until the evening.** Whether it is the bed or anything on which she sits, **when he touches it he shall be unclean until the evening. And if any man lies with her and her menstrual impurity comes upon him,** he shall be unclean seven days, and every bed on which he lies shall be unclean." Leviticus 15:19-24

"Also you shall not approach a woman to uncover her nakedness during her menstrual impurity." Leviticus 18:19

Moreover, Muhammad went a step further by classifying menstruation as Satan's handiwork:

Narrated Grandfather of Adi ibn Thabit

Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: Sneezing, drowsing, yawning in prayer, **also menstruation**, vomiting and nose-bleeding are from (the acts of) Satan. Transmitted by Tirmidhi. (*Tirmidhi Hadith*, Number 315; ALIM CD-ROM Version)

Obviously a God-fearing person would want to stay clear and as far away possible from any act or work of Satan. For instance, the Quran warns Muslims to avoid idolatrous practices, gambling and intoxicants since they are the works of Satan:

O believers, wine and arrow-shuffling, idols and divining-arrows are an abomination, **some of Satan's work; so avoid it**; haply So you will prosper. Satan only desires to precipitate enmity and hatred between you in regard to wine and arrow-shuffling, and to bar you from the remembrance of God, and from prayer. Will you then desist? S. 5:90-91 Arberry

Thus, since true Muslims shun idolatrous rites, gambling and intoxicants altogether on the grounds that they are satanic in origin, it would seem rather obvious that they would also avoid all physical contact with their women until they are completely purified from their periods – seeing that menstruation is said to be an illness from Satan according to Muhammad. This is precisely what the Hebrew Scriptures teach, i.e. men shouldn't touch or come near women during their courses until they are completely clean. We would therefore expect Muhammad to avoid all contact with women during their courses especially when he is supposed to serve as an example for Muslims to emulate:

Ye have indeed in the Apostle of God a beautiful pattern (of conduct) for any one whose hope is in God and the Final Day, and who engages much in the Praise of God. S. 33:21 Y. Ali

And verily, you (O Muhammad SAW) are on an exalted standard of character. S. 68:4 Hilali-Khan

Yet instead of avoiding women during their courses by not coming near them, Muhammad wasn't able to control his sexual desires since he would approach his wives to fondle them during their "illness":

Narrated 'Aisha:

The Prophet and I used to take a bath from a single pot while we were Junub. **During the menses**, he used to order me to put on an Izar (dress worn below the waist) **and used to fondle me**. While in Itikaf, he used to bring his head near me and I would wash it while I used to be in my periods (menses). (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Volume 1, Book 6, [Number 298](#))

Narrated 'Abdur-Rahman bin Al-Aswad:

(on the authority of his father) 'Aisha said: "Whenever Allah's Apostle **wanted to fondle anyone of us during her periods (menses)**, he used to order her to put on an Izar and start fondling her." 'Aisha added, "None of you could control his sexual desires as the Prophet could." (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Volume 1, Book 6, [Number 299](#); see also Number 300)

It is important to note here that Aisha didn't qualify her report by saying "once" or "sometimes" but specifically stated that Muhammad "used to" act in this way, and did so "whenever he wanted to", i.e. this was his common and regular behavior.

Narrated Aisha, Ummul Mu'minin:

Umarah ibn Ghurab said that his paternal aunt narrated to him that she asked Aisha: What if one of us menstruates and she and her husband have no bed except one? She replied: I relate to you what the Apostle of Allah (peace_be_upon_him) had done.

One night he entered (upon me) while I was menstruating. He went to the place of his prayer, that is, to the place of prayer reserved (for this purpose) in his house. He did not return until I felt asleep heavily, and he felt pain from cold. And he said: Come near me. I said: I am menstruating. He said: Uncover your thighs. I, therefore, uncovered both of my thighs. **Then he put his cheek and chest on my thighs** and I lent upon he until he became warm and slept. (*Sunan Abu Dawud*, Book 1, [Number 0270](#))

One may note on this matter that Muhammad had a multitude of wives so that there was nearly always at least one wife who did not have her menses at any given time. So, even in his greatest sexual urge he could easily have had intercourse with one or more of his wives without the need of fondling the wife that was currently having her period. In light of this, Aisha's statement that Muhammad was able to control his sexual desires is all the more ironic since he didn't need to touch any woman during her courses when he had so many other women to choose from who would not have been menstruating. It is rather obvious that Muhammad could not control and resist his strong urges to be with his child bride and needed to find a way to be physically intimate with her. He didn't care whether this meant that he would be breaking his own commands, ones which he claimed were given to him by God, to do so!

As if this weren't bad enough Muhammad would even recite the Quran, the supposed eternal speech of Allah, while in the lap of his menstruating child bride!

Narrated 'Aisha:

The Prophet used to lean on my lap and recite Qur'an while I was in menses. (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Volume 1, Book 6, [Number 296](#))

Narrated 'Aisha:

The Prophet used to recite the Quran with his head in my lap while I used to be in my periods (having menses). (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Volume 9, Book 93, [Number 639](#))

What makes this rather ironic is that faithful Muslims do not dare touch the Quran in a state of ritual impurity and will often wash their hands before touching their scripture, and yet their prophet had no qualms with reciting and mentioning his god's name while reclining on a ceremonially impure child!

Some Muslims get rather ingenious and claim that the Quran is not prohibiting all physical contact with women, but forbidding sexual intercourse, which is not the plain reading of the text. When asked on what basis they come to this conclusion, the response given is that Muhammad fondled his wives during their menses! In other words, they use circular reasoning by assuming that Muhammad, being perfect, wouldn't sin by breaking God's command, thereby proving that it is okay for men to fondle their wives during their courses.

In fact, Muslims are told to avoid touching women at all before their prayers, because they fear they may be unclean:

O ye who believe! Draw not near unto prayer when ye are drunken, till ye know that which ye utter, nor when ye are polluted, save when journeying upon the road, till ye have bathed. And if ye be ill, or on a journey, or one of you cometh from the closet, **or ye have TOUCHED women**, and ye find not water, then go to high clean soil and rub your faces and your hands (therewith). Lo! Allah is Benign, Forgiving. S. 4:43 Pickthall; cf. 5:6

According to some Muslim scholars this refers to touching a woman with one's hand:

... or you have touched women (*lamastum*, a variant reading has *lamastum*: both mean *lams*, that is, 'TOUCHING WITH THE HAND', as stated by Ibn 'Umar; this is also the opinion of al-Shafi'i, and it extends to touching with other parts of the skin; according to Ibn 'Abbas, however, it is [referring to] sexual intercourse) ... (*Tafsir al-Jalalayn*; [source](#); capital emphasis ours)

And:

Al-Shafi'i took the verse "Or if you have touched women" (4:43) literally, and considered that contact between the sexes, even accidental, nullified ablution. This is also the position of Ibn Mas'ud, Ibn 'Umar, al-Sha'bi, al-Nakha'i, al-Zuhri, and al-Awza'i, which is confirmed by Ibn 'Umar's report: "Whoever kisses OR TOUCHES HIS WIFE WITH HIS HAND must renew his wudu'." It is authentic and related in numerous places including Malik's Muwatta'. Al-Shafi'i said: "Something similar has reached us from Ibn Mas'ud." They all read the above verse literally,

without interpreting "touch" to mean "sexual intercourse" as do the Hanafis, or "touch with pleasure" as do the Malikis. (Dr. G.F. Haddad, *Imam Shafi'i*; [source](#); capital emphasis ours)

This, perhaps, accounts for Muhammad refusing to shake women's hands:

Malik related to me from Muhammad ibn al-Munkadir that Umayma bint Ruqayqa said, "I went to the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, with the women who took an oath of allegiance with him in Islam. They said, 'Messenger of Allah! We take a pledge with you not to associate anything with Allah, not to steal, not to commit adultery, not to kill our children, nor to produce any lie that we have devised between our hands and feet, and not to disobey you in what is known.' The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, 'In what you can do and are able.'"

Umayma continued, "They said, 'Allah and His Messenger are more merciful to us than ourselves. Come, let us give our hands to you, Messenger of Allah!' The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, '**I do not shake hands with women**. My word to a hundred women is like my word to one woman.'" (*Malik's Muwatta*, Book 55, [Number 55.1.2](#))

The above supports the interpretation that in Q. 2:222 mere touching was meant, not only intercourse.

More importantly, it is not at all certain that Muhammad didn't actually engage in sexual intercourse with his wives during their menses. Certain narrations presuppose that he did have sex with them during their courses:

Maimuna (the wife of the Holy Prophet) reported: The Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) contacted and **embraced** his wives over the waist-wrapper when they were menstruating. (*Sahih Muslim*, Book 003, [Number 0579](#))

And:

'A'isha reported: When anyone amongst us (amongst the wives of the Holy Prophet) menstruated, the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) asked her to tie a waist-wrapper over her (body) and then **embraced** her. (*Sahih Muslim*, Book 003, [Number 0577](#))

In his note to the above hadith of Aisha the translator of *Sahih Muslim* admits that the Arabic word for embraced, *yubashira*, is used in relation to sexual intercourse, even though he tries to explain it away:

499. This tradition has been the target of worst criticism by the hostile critics of the Hadith.

(1). They assert that it contravenes the teachings of the Qur'an (ii. 222), in which has been commanded to keep aloof from women during menstrual period. But these critics little realise that it is the sexual intercourse with the menstruating women which is prohibited. The hadith gives no indication that the Holy Prophet acted against this injunction of the Qur'an. The very wording that he ordered to tie a waist-wrapper on the lower part of her body gives a clear indication that the Holy Prophet did not have sexual intercourse with his wives during this period of discharge; he simply embraced them. The verb ... (yubashira) does not necessarily mean sexual intercourse. It denotes to have a contact, to touch (Lane's *Arabic-English Lexicon*). (*Sahih Muslim by Imam Muslim*, rendered into English by Abdul Hamid Siddiqui [Kitab Bhavan Exporters & Importers, New Delhi India, 11th reprinted edition 1995], Book III—Kitab Al-Haid (Menstruation), Chapter CXIX. Lying With One in Menstruation Above The Waist-Wrapper, Volumes I & II, p. 172; bold and underline emphasis ours) (1)

Nor is this the only Muslim to admit that the verb that is used here denotes sexual intercourse. This next source agrees that the word can refer to sexual relations:

c. *Mubasharah* in Arabic means either (i) having sex or (ii) simply embracing and caressing the wife. Here it is used in the latter sense [*sic*]. (*English Translation of Sunan Ibn Majah - Compiled by*

Imam Muhammad Bin Yazeed Ibn Majah Al-Qazwini, From Hadith No. 01 to 802, Ahadith edited and referenced by Hafiz Abu Tahir Zubair 'Ali Za'i, translated by Nasiruddin al-Khattab (Canada), final review by Abu Khaliyl (USA) [Darussalam Publications and Distributors, First Edition: June 2007], Volume 1, The Chapters on Dry Ablution, Chapter 121. What A Man May Do With His Wife When She is Menstruating, p. 423)

The translator of Sahih Muslim has indirectly provided corroboration for our assertion that the plain meaning of Q. 2:222, as even understood by certain Muslims (specifically those who reject the hadiths), is that men are forbidden from approaching women altogether during their menses.

Now the translator has assumed that Q. 2:222 does not command the men to avoid all contact with their menstruating wives but only prohibits them from having sex. He also reasons that the verb *yubashira* in this particular context cannot mean that Muhammad had sexual contact with his wives because he erroneously believes that his prophet faithfully carried out the Quran's instructions. Such is not the case at all since Muhammad often failed to practice what he preached just as the articles listed at [this page](#) amply testify.

Thus, if we do not assume that Muhammad acted consistently and if we take the verb in its natural sense then the meaning of the hadith becomes pretty plain and clear: Muhammad ordered his wives to wear a waist-wrapper so as to avoid getting the bed "messy" from their courses during the act of sex.

Interestingly, this next report substantiates our explanation of the facts:

Umm Salama reported: While I was lying with the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) in a bed cover I menstruated, so I slipped away and I took up the clothes (which I wore) in menses. Upon this the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) said: Have you menstruated? I said: Yes. He called me and I lay down with him in the bed cover. (And she further) said that she and the Messenger of Allah used to take bath from the same vessel **after sexual intercourse**. (Siddiqui, *Sahih Muslim by Imam Muslim*, Book 003, Number 0581, pp. 173-174; [source](#))

The implication of Umm Salama's statements is that Muhammad and her would engage in sexual intimacy even during her menses and would bathe from the same vessel afterwards.

Note: The online version has omitted a portion of the hadith, which may have been an accidental oversight or perhaps even deliberate. The webmaster may have felt that this particular narrative was too incriminating and embarrassing to post in its entirety since it casts Muhammad in a negative light, providing evidence that he failed to carry out his own commands.

Besides, even if we agreed with the translator that the verb simply meant that his prophet fondled his wives this still wouldn't absolve Muhammad from guilt. Muhammad not only violated the teachings of his own Quran which prohibit men from making contact with women during their courses, he also failed to do that which he claimed was better:

Narrated Mu'adh ibn Jabal:

I asked the Apostle of Allah (peace be upon him): What is lawful for a man to do with his wife when she is menstruating? He replied: What is above the waist-wrapper, ***BUT IT IS BETTER FOR YOU TO ABSTAIN FROM IT, TOO.***

Abu Dawud said: This (tradition) is not strong. (*Sunan Abu Dawud*, Book 1, [Number 0212](#))

Although the tradition is said not to be strong, the point is still clear: Muhammad told his companion it is better not to touch women from the waist up during their menstruation, something that he was personally guilty of doing! Muhammad thereby failed to put into practice his own teachings of what was better or more appropriate.

Hence, Muhammad's fondling of his wives is simply additional evidence of his inconsistency, of his failure to apply the commands of his own deity perfectly. It provides more proof that Muhammad was a sinner ([1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#), [6](#)) who needed the Lord Jesus to save him from his imperfections.

Endnotes

(1) Some of the critics of these particular hadiths include Shia Muslims, specifically those who write for www.answering-ansar.org. Here is what these Muslims say concerning the hadiths which mention Muhammad fondling his wives during their menses:

Twelfth example of Sunni morality - Rasulallah (s) violated the Qur'an to satiate his sexual desire (astaghfirullah)

We read in Muslim, Volume 1, Book 6, Number 298:

Narrated 'A'isha:

The Prophet and I used to take a bath from a single pot while we were Junub. During the menses, he used to order me to put on an Izar (dress worn below the waist) and used to (bashr) fondle me. While in Itikaf, he used to bring his head near me and I would wash it while I used to be in my periods (menses).

They then quote Q. 2:222 and proceed to say that:

This verse clearly prohibits intercourse whilst one's wife is menstruating. The word that the translator Mr. Muhsin Khan has translated as "fondle" is mubasharath - and this actually means 'to have sexual intercourse'. The term had been used by Allah (swt) in the Qur'an re Ramadhan - wherein Allah (swt) had stated that the previous injunction prohibiting intercourse during the night was abrogated:

"It is made lawful for you to have sexual relations with your wives on the night of the fasts. They are garments for you and you are the same for them. Allah knows that you used to deceive yourselves, so He turned to you and forgave you. So now have sexual relations with them and seek that which Allah has ordained for you, and eat and drink until the white thread (light) of dawn appears to you distinct from the black thread (darkness of night), then complete your fast till the nightfall. And do not have sexual relations with them (your wives) while you are in Itikaf in the mosques. These are the limits (set) by Allah, so approach them not. Thus does Allah make clear His signs to mankind that they may become Al Mut'ahqun (the pious)" (2:187).

The Qur'an has clearly used this term as meaning intercourse so if we are to accept this hadith as Sahih then it means that Ayesha claimed Rasulallah (s) had sex with her whilst she was menstruating. By deeming such hadith as Sahih these Nasibi have alleged that Rasulallah (s) violated a Qur'anic injunction (astaghfirullah).

The image had such a lasting effect on the Sahaba Jabir, that Ahl'ul Sunnah's authority work Kashaf al Ghimma page 65, narrates Jabir's words, from the mouth of Ayesha:

"During my menses, Rasulallah (s) would 'Bashr' [have intercourse] with me. He would order me to tie a knot in a large cloth, after I did this he would embrace my chest"

Is there any greater immorality than having sex with one's wife during her menses? Allah (swt) has condemned such an act and the Ahl as-Sunnah have proudly claimed that Rasulallah (s) had done just that. (*Mut'ah, a comprehensive guide*, Chapter 7: Examples of Sunni Morality; [source](#); underline emphasis ours)

Hence, these authors have provided further corroboration that, according to the language employed by the so-called sound narratives, Muhammad actually had sex with his wives during their menses in clear violation of the Qur'anic injunction. Moreover, much like Sunni Muslims, these Shias erroneously assume that Muhammad was a true prophet who acted in perfect compliance with the instructions of the Quran. Yet, unlike the Sunni Muslims who seek to interpret *bashr* to mean something other than sexual intercourse in order to avoid having to admit

that Muhammad failed to live up to his own standards, these Shias concede that this is what the Arabic word actually means in the context and take this as grounds to reject the validity of these reports.

However, not all Sunni Muslims attempt to obscure or redefine these narratives, and some have even been troubled by such reports. In fact, one such Muslim was so disturbed by these stories of Muhammad's blatant inconsistency that he ended up rejecting Islam and eventually found his way to Christ (by God's grace). The late Muslim convert to Christianity Muhammad Al Ghazoli stated concerning this very issue of Muhammad touching his wives during their courses that:

Despite the fact that Muhammad had eleven wives, the Messenger of Allah would not wait for his wives' menstrual period to end. He entered into his wives while they were menstruating, despite the fact that it is forbidden in the Sura of The Cow. In the *Hadith* of Sahih Muslim, Vol. I, page 590, Muslim says, quoting Nawawi, that Aisha said:

“If anyone of us was having her menstrual period, Allah's Messenger ordered her to come to him for sexual intercourse while she is on the peak of her period.”

Maymuna said:

“The Messenger of Allah used to have sexual intercourse with me during my menstrual period, while a piece of garment is between us.”

Umm Salma said the same thing.

Muhammad got married during the pilgrimage journey [cf. [this article](#)] when his god clearly forbade such action. He had sexual intercourse with his wives while they were having their menstrual periods, which his god also prohibited. Ask yourself: Why did Muhammad commit all those blatant violations? Surely, in the depth of his soul, he did not believe that the *real* Gabriel came to him, or that God sent down any thing upon him. How could he do all these disgusting things without reluctance? Were those the actions of a normal person? Certainly not ... Clearly, his life, actions and behavior never complied with God's real and holy teachings. Oh that Muslims of the earth may use their reasoning power! (Ghazoli, *Christ, Muhammad and I*, translated by R. Winston Mazakis, edited by David W. Daniels [Chick Publications, Ontario, Calif 91761 (*)], 2. Muhammad's 23 Marriages, pp. 56-57)

Here, Ghazoli translated the verb *bashr* in its literal sense, as having intercourse, since he clearly understood from the context that this is its precise meaning. Unlike other Sunni Muslims, he had gotten past the point of trying to cover up Muhammad's double standards and hypocrisy. Hopefully, we pray that more Muslims will also get to this point and find their way to Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

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